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the information relating to the Revolutionary militia, which is practically buried in the various county records. These records consist of pension declarations, memoranda of commissions &c., which supply a large amount of information. The original militia muster and pay rolls of the very large number of militia who served in Virginia during the Revolution appear to have been lost or destroyed and this fact adds to the value of Mr. McAllister's book. He has examined in whole or in part the records of forty-one counties and his extracts give a mass of new information. In addition there is a long list of Virginia militia pensioners who, in 1835, were living outside the State.

The work can be highly commended to all students of our Revolutionary history, or who are seeking Revolutionary ancestors. The only criticism which can be made is that there are not infrequent mistakes in the assignment to counties of the various militia companies referred to in the pension declarations. For instance, Robt. Bolling of Petersburg is assigned to Hanover because in 1778 he volunteered in that county under Captain Thos. Nelson. The troop of cavalry he commanded in 1780 was raised in and about his home, Petersburg. Only a very minute study of the records and a large knowledge of the residences of the militia captains will enable any one to place them all certainly in the counties to which they belong.

But these are minor errors, which in most cases are corrected by the pension declarations themselves as printed in this volume.

The book is also accompanied by a pamphlet giving a useful index to Virginians in Saffell's **Records of the Revolutionary War**.

THOMAS RITCHIE. A STUDY IN VIRGINIA POLITICS. BY CHARLES HENRY AMBLER, PH. D. THE BELL BOOK AND STATIONERY COMPANY. RICHMOND, 1913.

In the newspaper novel **Queed**, the hero, an assistant editorial writer, is represented as beginning life as a very serious student of society and politics. Since the time he lived in is our own, it is needless to say that he was not a marked editorial success. The old editor of the paper, a highly up-to-date personage, informed Queed one day in a spirit of kindly warning that the public vastly preferred descriptions of dog-fights to long political essays; and at the same time the young woman in whom Queed was interested and who was interested in Queed advised him to mend his sinfully impractical ways. Queed, taking the admonition to heart, abandoned science, became an authority on dog-fights, succeeded tremendously, married the level-headed young lady and lived happily ever afterwards.

Undoubtedly dog-fights are more entertaining than political discussions and the modern press by presenting dog-fights in every variety of skillful detail has taught the public to expect the newspapers to be filled with

them. For political information, still a matter of some importance, the public turns to the fifteen-cent magazines, which profess seriousness and a desire to arrive at the facts of politics. Therefore their power has grown great in the land and may grow greater in the approaching hour of crisis.

Doctor Ambler's journalistic biography, **Thomas Ritchie**, is a history of those times before the press had conceived the idea of describing dog-fights when the newspapers were filled not with news but with lengthy, dry and tedious political articles. And just for the reason that they were political organs *per se*, the newspapers had a political influence far greater than that of their modern descendants. The Richmond Enquirer, over which Ritchie presided, was a power and its editor played his part in president-making and in the shaping of great issues. Ritchie himself was courted by the politicians of all parties; Clay flattered him and Van Buren won him over to an alliance with the Jacksonian faction which had an important effect on the history of the country. He was a great leader in Virginia and a widely-read critic and exponent of Federal policies for the whole period of his editorship in Richmond and until he went to Washington to assume control of the administration organ, when he waned rapidly into his grave.

A biography of the noted Southern editor, who for a half-century was in intimate touch with State and general politics, could not well be anything but a history of Federal affairs from the stand-point of Virginia. What gives Doctor Ambler's book a peculiar value is the fact that this half-century he treats of covers years of an age of Virginia life about which little has been written. Aside from the **Letters and Times of the Tylers**, there was no authentic work on the subject until the appearance of **Thomas Ritchie**, and Doctor Ambler, by his exhaustive study of the files of the Richmond Enquirer and other Virginia papers, has been able to add much to our information on the history of the United States in the administrations of Monroe, Adams, Jackson and Van Buren, while the Virginia leaders, like Giles and Tazewell, who were known practically only as great names, are put in their proper historical setting. The "inwardness" of the failure of John C. Calhoun to attain the presidency and to secure a solid backing of Southern States for the South Carolina anti-tariff stand is revealed in Ritchie's inveterate distrust of Calhoun and his refusal of all proffers in the South Carolinian's behalf. Calhoun failed as much because he could not secure a united Southern support as for any other reason and he was unable to secure the support of Virginia largely because of Ritchie and his fellow-politicians, who while States-rights in principle wished to continue the good understanding with Van Buren and the other Northern leaders. Ritchie was an able, not a great man, and he could not read the signs of the times, or else it is not likely that he would have continued to aid in defeating the presidential ambitions of Calhoun, who alone of American

statesmen might have found some solution for the difficulties of the country. Nevertheless, in certain things, Ritchie showed insight, as in the demand for the annexation of Texas, which he was among the first to urge, beginning so early as 1819. He was anything but the self-sacrificing martyr type but there can be no question of the genuineness of his patriotism and the value of his services to Virginia, for the development of whose material resources he labored constantly through many years.

Doctor Ambler's book transcends its title: it is a general work of politics rather than a biography in the narrower sense and consequently it is more valuable than most biographies. He has with patient effort and excellent historical understanding untangled the twisted skeins of Virginia politics in that confused and difficult era when the Whig party arose to combat the Democracy—when the combinations of politicians changed with moving-picture quickness and the antagonism of North and South had begun to shape events for the final conflict. To have done this is to have accomplished a great work. The history of Virginia, as written, while fairly full for the colonial period and less full but at least outlined for the Revolution, has been largely a *terra incognita* for the time between 1781 and 1861, particularly for the decade or so following 1825. In making an adequate presentation of the politics of this time, when the state was still a pivotal if less conspicuous member of the Union, Doctor Ambler has shed light both on the history of Virginia and the of United States.

H. J. Eckenrode.